

# THE COLORADO NRCS CONNECTION



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## Insights & Highlights

by

Allen Green

State Conservationist



Once again another fiscal year is drawing to a close. I recently had the privilege of attending a number of Conservation District Watershed Association and Workgroup Meetings. I was most pleased that the response to how NRCS is implementing programs and providing technical assistance was very positive. Our conservation partners recognize the tremendous workload, pressures, and complexity of the job that you are doing. We have chosen to implement some of our key programs on a WS basis. While this adds to the complexity, I am convinced that it is paying dividends through the local leadership and input being provided.

We will soon be implementing what may prove to be the most significant conservation program ever. This is the Conservation Security Program (CSP). This completes the port-

folio of programs available for private lands conservation as provided by the last farm bill. As the Secretary of Agriculture has stated, CSP is set to "Reward the Best and Motivate the Rest". You will be receiving considerable information, training, and guidance in the upcoming weeks and months relative to CSP. It is imperative that we all become as proficient as possible in implementing CSP in order to meet the expectations of our customers.

I want to close with restating my thanks to all NRCS employees and our partners for the continued hard work and efforts being made to provide technical and financial assistance for private lands conservation.

You are making a difference!

Zig Ziglar on:

## Keeping Criticism Helpful

Keep criticism positive.

Recently, I tried to analyze the reasons I criticize. Three of them were negative and one was positive.

If before 10 a.m. I have been critical of everybody, I stop and say: "Fred, what's wrong with you? What are you mad at yourself about?" And generally I have to go and make a call to apologize to somebody. But my environment won't straighten out that day until I quit being mad at myself. If I criticize too many, I'm just passing the buck on a self-grudge.

The second reason: To show superior knowledge. How often does someone show you a great idea and you are showing enthusiasm when you suddenly say to yourself, "I can't be too enthusiastic because he may feel he is as smart as I am." So you say, "This is a great idea, but . . . ." Many "yes-buts" come from the

*see Criticism page 2*

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# Fremont CD hosts Iron Mountain Fire Rehabilitation Tour

by Mary Miller

Public Affairs Specialist, Area 3

The Fremont Conservation District (CD) Board hosted media, congressional staff, local officials, and agency personnel on a tour of its rehabilitation work in the Iron Mountain Fire area in late June.

Two years have gone by since the fire started on June 2, 2002, when a barbecue grill toppled over in the wind. It burned 4,436 acres, 95 percent of which was private land.

The Fremont CD sponsored the Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP) project which provided cost-share dollars through NRCS for rehabilitation. From June 2002 until August 2003, it partnered with various agencies, including the NRCS, Colorado State Forest Service, and Fremont County Cooperative Extension on the fire rehabilitation efforts. During the rehab efforts, the CD staff spent approximately 60 percent of their work time on fire rehab projects.

As the EWP work began, the main goal was to save home sites that were at the greatest risk of soil erosion. Protecting the watershed was another goal.

Several community groups including 4-H clubs, Boy Scouts, and the Colorado Workforce helped during volunteer work days organized by the CD. In all, the CD held 14 volunteer days with anywhere from 9 to 80 individuals at each function.

Some of the conservation practices installed or worked on were seed-ing and mulching, contour scarification, sandbags and wattles, channel roughing, ephemeral drainage, and tree

removal. Overall, seven and a half tons of native grass seed and other erosion control practices were applied to 1,100 acres of the private land that was burned in the fire.

Joan Adair, Fremont CD president, said that she can see where the volunteers scratched the soil because grass is growing in these spots. The growth was the result of scarification, the scratching of the surface to allow the sprouts to penetrate the soil. Rick Romano, NRCS district conservationist in Canon City, added that the rakes break up a waxy buildup from sap and needles broiled by the flames into an impermeable "hydrophobic" layer.

According to Romano, the wattles and trees helped hold the soil. When NRCS went back to look at the results of the rehabilitation efforts, they noticed the first grass to grow was above and below the straw wattles and log terraces.

For its volunteer efforts, the Fremont CD received national recognition by the NRCS Earth Team Volunteer Program.



Joan Adair, Fremont CD President, left foreground, listens as Rick Romano, NRCS district conservationist in Canon City, describes EWP and work done at one stop during the CD's Iron Mount Fire Rehab Tour.

## Criticism, cont'd from page 1

desire to show your superior knowledge.

The third root of negative criticism is usually a performer who didn't make the grade. Those who start well but don't make the A list usually become critics. You can't put a failed executive back into the ranks—he will become a critic.

Positive criticism is simply: A genuine desire to bring improvement. It can be done quietly. True positive criticism is not done in the earshot of others, unlike the three negative types that generally are done in public. Really strong positive criticism is specific and directed only to the point that needs work.

When you can positively criticize you are demonstrating emotional stability as a leader.

This week, review a circumstance in which you negatively criticized—at work or at home. Then think about what was really going on. Next, think about an example of positive constructive criticism and how effectively it worked.

## Did You Know?

- Colorado has approximately 32 million acres of agricultural land, 47 percent of the State's total land base of 66.6 million acres.
- There are approximately 31,369 farms and ranches in the state, averaging 991 acres each.
- Colorado ranks 17th nationally in cash receipts from agriculture, totaling \$4.9 billion in 2003.
- Agribusiness provides an estimated 105,000 jobs and generates \$15.8 billion annually for the State's economy.

### The Colorado Connection

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# Celebrating Agricultural Heritage

by Jeanette Colville, Public Affairs Specialist, Area 2

"Celebrating the Preservation of Agriculture" was the theme of this year's Boulder County Fair.

Boulder County Commissioners announced that the goal of the fair is, *"to recognize the importance of the agricultural heritage and this vanishing way of life, let us all share in, celebrate, and enjoy the farm produce and the people who still make their living off the land."*

Longmont and Boulder Valley Conservation Districts and the NRCS Longmont Field Office hosted a conservation education booth at this year's fair showcasing the education and assistance programs available to farmers and ranchers. Longmont and Boulder Valley Conservation District Manager



Volunteer Heather McIntyre (left) joins Conservation District Manager Nancy McIntyre in telling Fair visitors about the many conservation benefits of the Seedling Tree Sale Project.

Nancy McIntyre and her daughter, volunteer Heather McIntyre, provided information to visitors on the Conservation Districts' popular seedling tree sale project.

*"We take orders for the seedlings each year at the fair from people who own two acres or more of land,"* said Nancy.

Landowners plant the seedlings as buffers to prevent wind and water erosion, and as farmstead and feed-lot wind breaks.

The seedling tree sales program offers four varieties of seedlings - eastern red cedar, Rocky Mountain juniper, Colorado blue spruce, and ponderosa pine.

*"The seedlings are grown by the Colorado State University State Forest Service nursery in Fort Collins,"* said Nancy.

The seedlings are sold in bundles of thirty at a low cost to promote conservation and agricultural sustainability.

*"The Districts have promoted the seedling tree sales program since the '60s,"* said Nancy.



Celebrating agricultural heritage at the fair included the traditional showing and judging of livestock.



Fun in the bunny barn! Small animals are an important part of the fair -- turkeys, chickens, and rabbits get close scrutiny from the judges while contestants wait for the results.



Livestock get great care and grooming before they are presented to the judges.

## Partnerships, a RX for Success

by Jeanette Colville  
Public Affairs Specialist, Area 2

NRCS shares a long, proud, and productive history with local Conservation Districts that dates back to the devastating days of the American Dust Bowl. Today, NRCS continues to value the dedication of the landowners, friends, and neighbors who make up the Conservation District Board of Supervisors, and its membership of cooperators who dedicate their time and effort to ensuring the conservation of Colorado's natural resources for sustained agricultural use and production.

*"It's the dedication of people like Pam Brewster with the Douglas County Conservation District and Toni Palen with the Kiowa Conservation District, working in partnership with NRCS soil and range technical specialists in the NRCS Castle Rock Field Office that sustains the tradition of neighbor-helping-neighbor that keeps Colorado's farming and ranching lifestyle and economy strong,"* said NRCS Area Conservationist Roy Hall.



The NRCS Castle Rock Field Office staff teams up with the Douglas County and Kiowa Conservation District administrators to coordinate conservation planning exhibits for the upcoming county fairs. Dan Nosal, NRCS Range Specialist; Toni Palen, Kiowa Conservation District Administrator; Linda Pollick, NRCS Soil Conservation Technician; and Pam Brewster, Douglas County Conservation District Administrator

# on the pulse

## Area Office News

### Area One

**The Rio Blanco Field Service Center** entered a float in Meeker's 4th of July Parade. The conservation float won First Place from among over 50 entries. The float was designed by **Jan Glass**, District Manager, and built by numerous volunteers, NRCS and FSA staff.



Approximately 2,500 people attended the Annual 4th of July parade in Meeker.

**A Teacher's Workshop** that showcased local farmers and ranchers, as well as recreation in the Rifle/Silt area, was presented by the Bookcliff, Mount Sopris, and South Side Conservation Districts, in partnership with the Colorado Foundation for Agriculture, Garfield County Farm Bureau, the Holy Cross Cattlewomen's Association, the Garfield County CSU Extension Office, GLCI, and NRCS.

Twenty-two teachers from across the state participated in the workshop which provided a diverse agenda to include multi-use on Federal land, cattle and sheep ranching, hay production, and different irrigation methods.

During the workshop, educators had the opportunity to visit local farms, ranches, and greenhouses; learn about ranching operations and alternative farming practices at an elk, cattle, and sheep ranch; to work on a ranch where they mended fences, changed irrigation water, branded and inoculated cattle, and inspected forest service leases; and to be involved in a panel discussion between resource professionals, county commissioners, and host ranchers who represented over 33,645 acres of rangeland and farmland.

Each educator had the opportunity to share their experiences with the group on the final day of the workshop, and they expressed a new understanding and respect of agriculture and the farmers and ranchers that make it happen. Many were eager to take into the classroom the educational materials provided, including the local grants and riparian trailer.

### Area Two

**The Flagler Field Office** teamed up with the Flagler Conservation District at the annual county fair hosting a "Survive the Drought" display that provided visitors with information on rangeland recovery, tree care during drought, and moisture management using strip tillage farming.

*"The display was up for six days," said NRCS District Conservationist **Kristi Gay**, "and we estimate that hundreds of people saw it. The fair also gave us an opportunity to distribute the newly published Kit Carson County Soil Survey to landowners."*

**The Flagler Field Office staff** and members of the Flagler Conservation District Board recently hosted a farmland tour focused on the impacts of drought on agriculture on eastern Colorado's upland plains for reporters and photographers from the *Denver Post*. The final article published in a Sunday edition of the *Post* encompassed statewide drought impacts.



A *Denver Post* reporter and two Flagler Conservation District farmers discuss drought impacts on the eastern plains.

**The Flagler News** published the NRCS news release announcing funding for nearly \$1.5 million for the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) in Colorado. The grants help landowners protect grasslands from conversion to other uses while sustaining them as working ranch lands. The Flagler Field Office received ten inquiries about the program.

**Mike Petersen, NRCS Area 2** Water Management Specialist, teamed up with the Yuma Irrigation Research Foundation farm, the Yuma Conservation District, and agronomists from Monsanto Company for a two-day field presentation on strip-till management, crop plot tours, agriculture education and safety seminars, and horse gentling training. The Yuma Irrigation Research Foundation (IRF) is a non-profit organization dedicated to the development of advanced agricultural productivity in the arid high plains Ogallala aquifer region. Annual attendance at the IRF summer field event draws farmers, ranchers, agronomists, and other interested representatives from research and private industries from a five-state region.

## Area Three

**Ben Berlinger, Area** Rangeland Management Specialist, La Junta area office; **Beth Fortman**, Soil Conservationist, Pueblo field office; and **Leon Kot**, District Conservationist, Woodland Park office, were staffers at this year's Camp Rocky held in Divide. **Bobby Castle**, Soil Conservation Technician, and **Greg Langer**, Soil Conservationist, both of the Colorado Springs field office, assisted with projects the campers implemented. Camp Rocky is a week long, residential camp for 14-19 year olds who enjoy the outdoors and are interested in natural resources. Students learn about range management, soil and water conservation, forestry management, and fish and wildlife.

**The Sangre de Cristo** Resource Conservation & Development Council held training on the RC&D program and hosted a barbeque at its semi-annual council meeting on July 22 in Westcliffe. Council officers, board members, and **Jane Wustrow**,

RC&D Coordinator, provided the training.

**The Colorado Springs field** office staff is working with the Central Colorado Conservation District, the City of Colorado Springs, and the Pueblo field office to develop seeding guidelines when the Southern Delivery Water Line is installed from Pueblo to Colorado Springs. The Colorado Springs field office is also working with the Hanover community to try to find adequate water sources for the small acreage landowners who have set up homes in the area.

**The Colorado Springs field** office and the Woodland Park office are reviewing damage done by recent rainstorms that washed out roads in the Hayman fire burn area. So far, most damage has been isolated to county roads. The Woodland Park, Colorado Springs, and La Junta area staff are providing technical assistance where needed.

**Ben Berlinger, Area** Rangeland Management Specialist, La Junta area office, and **Kim Riddle**, Rangeland Management Specialist, Springfield field office, helped at the Black Mesa Ecological Academy in early July. Twenty-eight students from five states attended, including three students from southeastern Colorado.



Ben Berlinger presents certificates of completion to students from southeastern Colorado.

**Rich Rhoades and Marcus Clark**, Pueblo field office, met with 30 Colorado State University-

Pueblo students in an Environment Studies Lab Class. **Rhoades** gave a presentation about NRCS and its role in conservation on private lands.

**Lorenz Sutherland, Area** Resource Conservationist, La Junta area office, is a member of a national team that is developing a Salinity Technology training course for NRCSers. The course will provide participants with the principles of salinity identification and the causes and effects of salinity occurring on various land types. It will also provide a review of soil and water plant relationships and the salinization process.

**The Bent Conservation** District (CD) Board dedicated its newly remodeled building in Las Animas on Wednesday, June 30. The building, originally built in 1958, now houses the CD office plus four agencies—USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA Farm Service Agency, USDA Rural Development, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service.



Shown at the Bent County Agricultural Building dedication ceremony are (left to right) Colorado State Senator Ken Kester, District 2; James Souders, Lori Chase, Wesley Eck, Kent Reyher, Tom Wallace, all Bent CD Board Members; Cindy Schleining, USDA-NRCS Las Animas District Conservationist; and Lance Verhoeff, Lower Arkansas River Watershed Association President.

**The Southeast Colorado** RC&D Council took part in the ribbon cutting ceremony for the Cottonwood Ridge Assisted Living project recently completed in



Rocky Ford. Other partners in the project were the Rocky Ford Community Hospital Board, Tri-County Housing, and USDA Rural Development.



Nearly 100 people attended the ribbon cutting ceremony at Cottonwood Ridge Assisted Living Center.

**Mary Miller**, Public Affairs Specialist, La Junta area office, was featured in the "NRCS Employee Spotlight" on *my.NRCS* from July 23-29.

**NRCS staff and Colorado** Chapter members of the Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) **Allen Green**, State Conservationist; **Amy Sidener**, Soil Conservationist; and **Mary Miller**, Public Affairs Specialist, recently attended the SWCS Annual Conference in St. Paul, MN. **Miller** was honored with a commendation award given to Society members for service to their chapter.

**The Fremont County USDA** Service Center participated in a short workshop on the West Nile Virus recently. J.R. Phillips from the Fremont County Health Department gave a presentation on the origins and history of the virus, and described ways to take precautions when outside. He had samples of many types of insect repellent, as well as animal-safe repellents that can be used in standing water.

**Leon Kot**, District Conservationist, Woodland Park office, took the Teller-Park Conservation District's Riparian Demo Trailer to the Denver Boy Scout Jamboree. Over 1,000 scouts and adults attended the Jamboree and stopped to see Kot's demonstration on river,

wetlands, erosion, and watersheds.

**Greg Langer**, Soil Conservationist, and **Krystal Phillips**, Intern, both of the Colorado Springs field office, took the Teller-Park CD Riparian Demo Trailer to the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo in Colorado Springs recently. They gave presentations to numerous children and adults who were at the zoo.

## Area Four

**Scott Woodall**, multi-county Range Management Specialist, Pagosa Springs field office, led a range ecology and plant identification workshop for the Colorado Division of Wildlife in late June. Wildlife officers and habitat biologists from Southwestern Colorado convened at Williams Creek to study the area and increase their understanding of the Montane ecosystem.



Scott Woodall, foreground, leads a workshop on range ecology and plant identification.

**The Costilla County Soils** Office is conducting extensive research on soil temperature throughout the San Luis Valley in south-central Colorado. This study will provide actual data to assist in crop response interpretations and the proper classification of soils. With the use of Hobo data loggers by the Onset Corporation, temperatures are collected at 4 and 20 inches below the ground every five hours throughout the year. After a year, data from the unit is downloaded and analyzed. The information will then be used to support Costilla County's Soil Survey.

**The Durango Service Center** is collecting samples for a new display board of grasses that grow in La Plata County. There are already brochures and booklets to identify weeds, but not many readily available resources to identify grasses. **Dan Lynn**, District Conservationist, has a display board with some of the more popular grass species but wanted the office to have one with as many La Plata County grasses that could be found. Several times a month customers have been bringing in grasses and weeds to the office to be identified. So far **Krista Neil**, Student Trainee, and **Valerie Lovett**, Soil Conservationist, have collected and identified 31 samples to put on the new display. The grasses are labeled with the scientific name as well as the common name for identification. A booklet containing pictures of the grasses before they were collected and a short paragraph about the grass is also being compiled and on display. The grass display has been very popular with customers and is getting great reviews from walk-in contacts.



There are 31 grass samples today, and many more to be collected before winter!

**Catherine P. Wilson** has been selected as the Area Conservationist for Area 4, effective October 3. She will be joined by her husband, Darrell, and their three children, ages 7, 9, and 11.

Catherine currently serves as Assistant State Conservation for Field Operations in Georgia. Previously she was District Conservationist in Oklahoma and Colorado, and RC&D Coordinator in Iowa.

# on the pulse

## State Office News



In early August, approximately 36 new NRCS employees converged on the State Office in Lakewood for a three-day New Employee Orientation. Employees from the state office and various area and field offices were provided an overview of the agency's work and its role in Colorado communities, as well as a summary of all the major programs administered by NRCS. In addition, various state officers provided overviews of their departments and programs, including employee benefits, travel, and spending policies. A tour of the state office concluded the orientation.

**Allen Green, State Conservationist**, was recently honored with an Outstanding Leadership award in recognition of his service to Colorado since 2001. The award was presented by **Richard Van Klaveren**, former NRCS Northern Plains Regional Conservationist. Van Klaveren visited the state office to present the award and to meet with principal



Richard Van Klaveren, former Northern Plains Regional Conservationist, left, presents State Conservationist Allen Green with a clock in recognition of his outstanding leadership.

staff prior to the public announcement of leadership changes in NRCS.

NRCS Chief **Bruce I. Knight** announced the restructuring of the agency's six regional offices to three—East, Central, and West. **Van Klaveren** will now serve as the State Conservationist for Iowa. **Sara Braasch** has been named the Regional Assistant Chief for the West Region, which includes Colorado. Braasch will be stationed in NRCS's national headquarters in Washington, D.C.

For more information about the restructuring and the new NRCS officials, visit the website at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/news/releases/2004/newofficials.html>.

**Tony Puga, Soil Conservationist**, State Office, has accepted a detail as Acting National Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) Manager at National Headquarters in Washington, D.C. His assignment began on August 16, and will end on November 9, 2004. His duties include answering questions on policy and procedure, assisting in the development of new policies, and tracking progress on easement closings.

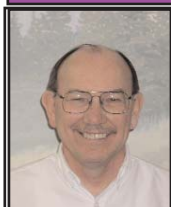
**Welcome new state office employee Chris Pacheco**, Assistant Snow Survey Supervisor. He has worked for NRCS for 27 years, most recently as a Resource Conservationist at the National Water and Climate Center in Portland.

Pacheco was born and reared in New Mexico, where he graduated from New Mexico State University in 1981.

**Welcome new state office employee, Rochelle Wimberly**, Visual Information Specialist. She comes to NRCS from the private sector with a career background in education and public relations. She was most recently employed by the Lowry Redevelopment Authority, the quasi-public agency managing the redevelopment of the former Air Force base, as the Community Relations Manager,

Wimberly grew up in Colorado Springs and graduated from Colorado State University-Pueblo in 1997.

# CSCB ACTION



**Robert Zebroski**  
*Director*

The Nonpoint Source Council sponsored a tour of several projects funded by Section 319 of the Clean Water Act. Included in the tour were numerous rock structures used in the restoration of Rio Blanco River south of Pagosa Springs, as well as clean-up of acid drainage from the mines in the Creede area. Both projects have been very successful. The Council will continue to expand their activities to improve water quality.

Eight of the nine State Conservation Board members attended the Board's meeting at the Upper Colorado Environmental Plant Center in Meeker. After the meeting, the Board enjoyed a tour of the Center.

Robert Zebroski facilitated a meeting in the development of a new vision for the Board of Supervisors of the Upper Huerfano CD. The CD has a new District Conservationist and three associate board members who want to explore new directions for the District.

East Otero and Olney Boone Conservation Districts have hired Connie Baker as their new district manager. Zebroski provided training to Baker and will follow-up with additional guidance.

Yuma County Conservation District began the process of updating their five-year, long-range program with a public meeting facilitated by Robert Zebroski. A number of other Districts are now initiating efforts to revise their programs.

At Jefferson Conservation District's annual meeting, Allen Gallamore, District Forester for the Colorado State Forest Service, gave

a presentation on the District's most critical concern: Front Range Fuels Reduction Through Partnerships.

Y W Well Testing Association held their quarterly meeting of the Irrigation Water Management (IWM) Program in Anton. Three State employees assigned to the Association are conducting IWM on approximately 13,000 acres this summer.

Carl Zimmerman, CSCB Conservation Specialist, provided District Supervisor training in La Jara for new supervisors on the Conejos CD. He also worked with Debbie Harmon, new manager for the District, who has a strong agricultural background and considerable experience in many aspects of board business.

Zimmerman convened a committee of resource professionals to evaluate and rank wildlife project proposals to be funded with a \$200K allocation from the Basin States Wildlife Costshare Program. Six projects were selected from 12 applications. On-site evaluations were scheduled for July, with actual development to begin late summer.

The Western Slope office is coordinating ATV training for NRCS and District employees. The first class held on June 23 was filled to capacity. Additional classes are scheduled to ensure that Districts understand the hazards related to ATV use.

Debbie Blume, CSCB Administrative Assistant, developed and distributed a document on retention/disposition of records for Conservation Districts. The Districts will use the document as a guideline in organizing and maintaining paperwork and files.

Lieutenant Governor Jane Norton attended the Bent Conservation District's monthly meeting in late June. The District sponsored an open house celebrating the completion of the renovation of its District Office Building.

Carl Zimmerman gave a River Trailer presentation at Cross-Orchards History Farm during the Foundation for Water Education Tour in late June.

## UP AND COMING



*You may  
want to  
jot this  
down!*

**In-State Leadership Team Mtg.**----Sept. 13-15

**National Association of Conservation Districts Meeting**-----Sept. 20-24

**Plant Materials Center Annual Meeting**-----Sept. 27-29

**National EQIP Training Mtg.** -----Oct. 4-7

**State Technical Committee Mtg.** --Oct. 12

**National Leadership Team Mtg.** --Oct. 20

**Salinity Forum** -----Oct. 20-21

**Watershed Working Lands Summit**-----Oct. 26-28

**15th Annual South Platte Forum**--Oct. 27-28



### Watershed Meeting Dates

**Upper South Platte** -----Sept. 8

**Rio Grande** -----Sept. 9

**Upper Arkansas** -----Sept. 23

**Lower Arkansas** -----Sept. 23

**Gunnison/Dolores** -----Sept. 28

**Colorado River** -----Sept. 29

**North Platte** -----Sept. 30





# A Common Goal: Healthy and Productive Grasslands

by Bonnie Kuntz, Morgan Conservation District Manager and  
Jeanette Colville, Area 2 Public Affairs Specialist

**T**he recent Morgan County Conservation District Range Tour offered a hands-on look at Colorado's High Plains native grasslands, a host of guest speakers presenting a variety of educational agriculture and wildlife updates, and a steak-fry lunch and follow-up discussion under the shade of the beautiful Wildcat Ranch cottonwood trees. Farmers, ranchers, and representatives from special interest groups and the Colorado State University Cooperative Extension were hosted by Larry and Pat Snider on their 8,000-acre ranch in northwest Morgan County.

The Sniders are enrolled in the USDA Farm Bill Grassland Reserve Program (GRP). Grasslands make up the largest land cover on America's private lands, covering more than 525 million acres. The Grassland Reserve Program provides financial and technical assistance to help landowners protect and restore these valuable lands.

*"Grasslands provide critical ecological benefits and play a key role in environmental quality, as well as contributing to the economies of many rural areas."* Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman said when introducing the GRP as a component of the 2002 Farm Bill.

*The tour included a survey of the bottom lands and the upland plains of the 8,000-acre Snider ranch.*



Host rancher Larry Snider started the tour by speaking to the group about his concern in dealing with drought, as well as his experience and involvement with conserva-

tion programs. He spoke in detail about the benefits of cell grazing management systems.

Representatives from various agencies continued the discussion with updates to include: Colorado State University Cooperative Extension gave a presentation on livestock nutrition and the effect of drought on plants; the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory gave a presentation on grass bird communities and the benefits of range management practices for prairie ecosystems; the Colorado Division of Wildlife led a discussion on threats to short-grass wildlife communities and agency conservation activities; and the Environmental Defense Organization discussed the Safe Harbor Agreement which allows landowners to participate in wildlife habitat restoration projects on private land, free from the threat of future land-use restrictions.

*A variety of agriculture and wildlife presentations were conducted by representatives of organizations dedicated to native grassland protection.*



The range tour was sponsored by the Morgan Conservation District, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Colorado Watershed Network, with a big helping hand from Premier Farm Credit and Sharp Bros. Seed Company. The tour brought a variety of groups together with an array of perspectives, but with a common interest in improving and conserving native grasslands.

*"Native grasslands are important to many people for a number of reasons,"* said NRCS Area 2 Conservationist Roy Hall, *"but we all share a common goal - healthy and productive grassland ecosystems."*

# NATIONALLY SPEAKING

## USDA Provides Nearly \$6 Million of Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program Funds to 32 States

Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman today announced the availability of nearly \$6 million in Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) funds. Thirty-two states will receive this funding to purchase permanent conservation easements on America's farms and ranches.

*"These funds will allow more farmers and ranchers to keep their land in agriculture,"* said Veneman during a visit to the Farm Focus farm show in Van Wert, Ohio. *"This program helps to ensure that productive land is protected, and encourages farmers and ranchers to use conservation systems that improve environmental health."*

This USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) program protects productive agricultural land by purchasing conservation easements to limit conversion of farm and ranch lands to nonagricultural uses.

These FRPP funds have been reallocated to states that requested additional funding. In distributing the funds, NRCS considered the conversion of farmland,



*FRPP funds allow more farmers and ranchers to keep their land in agriculture.*

the conversion of prime farmland and states' requests for additional monies to complete specific projects.

Approximately \$240,000 was reallocated to Colorado.

## USDA Notes 50 Years of Watershed Protection

Agriculture Deputy Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment Mack Gray today hailed the 50th Anniversary of the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program that has helped protect lives and property and improve natural resources.

*"Protecting lives and property and improving our natural resources within our nation's watersheds is a major priority for the Bush administration,"* Gray said during an event to celebrate the Anniversary in Newton, Kansas.

*"Every citizen in this country lives in a watershed. They are nature's natural boundaries. NRCS has made*

*much progress in reducing damages caused by flooding, sedimentation and erosion in watersheds nationwide."*

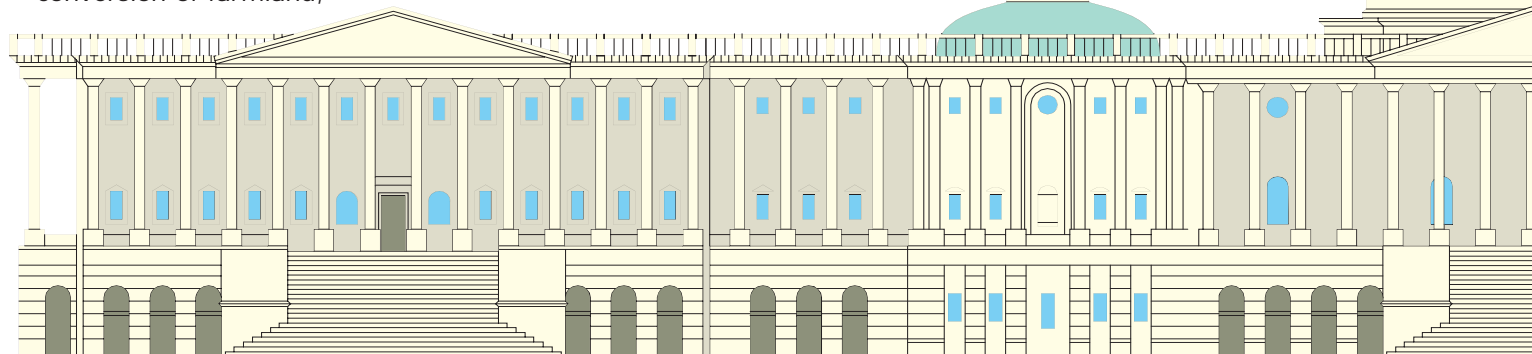
NRCS Chief Bruce Knight also marked the event and toured the Badger Creek Watershed Project in Central Iowa. Several of the nation's governors have marked the program's 50th anniversary with proclamations, including Iowa, Hawaii, Kansas, Oklahoma and Wisconsin.

About \$14 billion in federal, state and local funds have been invested in these projects since the program



*Citizens can enjoy increased recreational opportunities from projects where wetlands are enhanced.*

was created in 1954. Through this program, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides technical and financial assistance to project sponsors, such as local conservation districts, counties, cities and tribes, and for watershed projects.

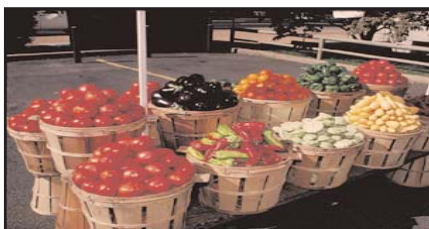


Some consist of flood control dams built on tributaries to larger streams or rivers, while others consist of land and water conservation practices.

NRCS has assisted watershed sponsors to construct more than 11,000 flood control dams in 1,500 watersheds in 47 states. These projects are providing an estimated \$1.7 billion annually in reduced flooding and erosion damages, recreation, water supplies and wildlife habitat. Most of these dams were originally designed to protect agricultural areas from flooding. As population increased, homes and businesses were built where crops once grew. Now the dams protect people, businesses, and the infrastructure of these communities.

Local communities benefit from more than 1,500 watershed projects nationwide. Economic, social and environmental benefits from this program have exceeded the dollars spent many times. Benefits include cost reductions of maintaining roads and bridges; reductions in erosion, contributing to greater productivity of cropland and grazing lands; and reductions in damages from frequent flooding. Citizens can enjoy increased recreational opportunities from projects where wetlands are enhanced and water-based recreational facilities are constructed.

## USDA Releases 2002 Census of Agriculture



*Data represent all agricultural operations, defined as any place which sold or normally would have sold more than \$1,000 worth of agricultural products during the census year.*

Half of America's farms and ranches have Internet access and nearly 39 percent report using a computer for their farm business, according to new data released from the 2002 Census of Agriculture.

*"These data illustrate the importance of the eGovernment initiatives being implemented by USDA," said Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman. "We are making more information available to farmers and ranchers through the Internet and helping to provide broadband access to rural communities. To date, this administration has provided over \$253 million in broadband loans for rural areas."*

Conducted every five years by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), the census of agriculture provides the only source of detailed, comprehensive agricultural facts for every county in America and gives facts on very specialized or small scale agriculture.

There is a significant difference in the measurements from the 1997 Census of Agriculture to the 2002 Census of Agriculture. For the first time, data for every county and state have been statistically adjusted to account for farms missed or misclassified in the census.

Thousands of aggregated facts and figures can be accessed online from the NASS website at [www.usda.gov/nass](http://www.usda.gov/nass) and click on "Census of Agriculture."

## New NRCS Website Answers FAQs on Organics

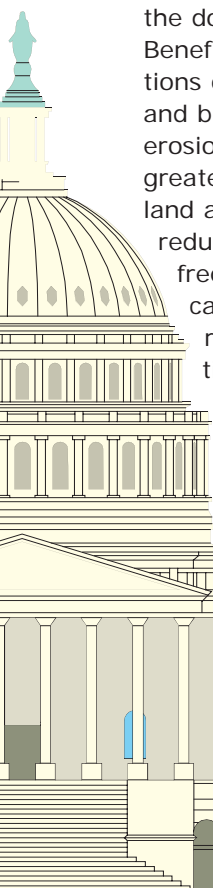


A new NRCS organic agriculture and resource conservation web site will help answer frequently asked questions about resource conservation on certified organic farms and ranches.

The site provides field staff with an introduction to the requirements for organic certification, issues related to writing conservation plans for organic producers, and common resource concerns on organic operations.

A list of Internet resources for further information is included.

Visit the new website at [http://soils.usda.gov/sqi/soil\\_quality/land\\_management/organic.html](http://soils.usda.gov/sqi/soil_quality/land_management/organic.html).





# Irrigation Ditch Mapping in the San Juan Basin

by Elena Barnes, Secretary, San Juan RC&D

The San Juan River Basin of southwestern Colorado contains an extensive irrigation system which brings much-needed water to agricultural and residential areas. The GPS mapping of irrigation ditch systems has been of interest to ditch companies, the San Juan RC&D, and the Bureau of Reclamation for many years as a way to have complete and accurate data of the irrigation systems and structures. Prior to the turn of the century, some people had knowledge of certain parts of the ditch system while others were familiar with different sections of the ditch line. Original maps existed of the ditch lines but much of the information was based on personal perception and guesswork. Having all of the data scientifically compiled, verified by global positioning satellites, and made available for use by all ditch riders and employees would greatly enhance and facilitate the delivery of water, improve the maintenance and installation of structures, and enable better management of this valuable resource.

A general plan was developed by San Juan RC&D to determine protocol, the provision of general technical oversight of the project, the creation of codes for the ditch survey data dictionary, how to address issues that arise during the survey, and the cost-share agreement to pay for the survey. For the third year in a row, BUREC has approved grants

for specific portions of these summer projects, with the remaining funds and support services provided by the ditch companies and the San Juan RC&D. The selection of which ditches to follow in the summer of 2002 was based on the participation and support of the ditch companies requesting the survey. To date, GPS surveys of ditches in La Plata, Archuleta, and Montezuma counties have been completed, about 15 ditches in all.

To conduct the surveys, students who have studied GIS technology are recruited from Fort Lewis College in Durango. Using a Trimble GeoXM GPS unit calibrated to take a reading every three seconds, they walk every foot of the ditch lines, also taking digital photographs of all points and ditch structures, such as head gates, bridges, parshall flumes, culverts, and utilities. Once the survey data is recorded in the GPS unit, it is downloaded and run through differential correction, a process where the data is compared to readings collected by a stationary base station. The data then self-corrects based on the fixed readings from the base stations. Final maps are created using ESRI's ArcView 8.3, incorporating USGS digital topographic maps and aerial photos as backgrounds or bases for the maps. County parcel and road information acquired from county data sets are overlaid to help deter-



Part of a 53 mile irrigation ditch system in Montezuma County.

mine through whose land the ditch runs and on whose land specific structures are built. The digital photos taken during the survey are hotlinked to the ArcView map, enabling a viewer to click on any symbol on the map representing a point and a digital photo will pop up of that specific structure. Upon completion of each ditch survey, the ditch companies and BUREC are provided with a 34 x 44 inch map of the ditch system with a aerial photo background and a USGS topographic background along with a three-ring binder which includes a copy of every digital photo taken along the ditch line, a copy of the metadata, and a page describing the project history. Included with the maps and hardcopy information is a CD of the ArcView data that can be manipulated, giving the ditch companies the ability to update or modify the maps as necessary in the future.

The GPS surveying of ditch lines continues to be an attractive and important project for the San Juan River Basin area. With the ability to better manage the delivery of water to irrigation ditch users and owners, the entire community benefits.

# Private Forester Creates New Business ...with help from Colorado RC&D

By Jerry D. Schwien

*"People with forestry degrees need to be working in the woods,"* says Len Lankford, a pioneering private forester in Colorado.

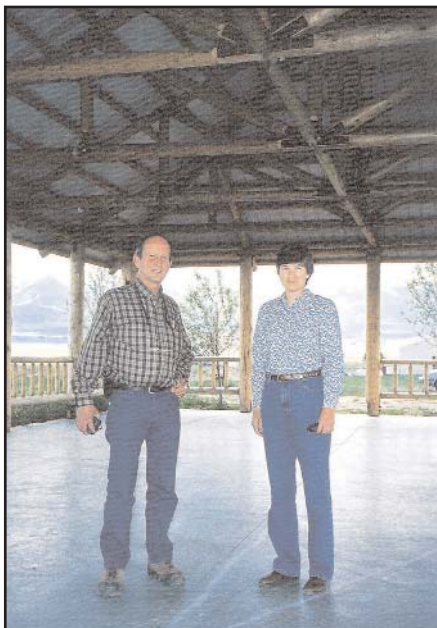
Lankford believes the U.S. Forest Service should be helping to establish small community businesses like his Greenleaf Forestry and Wood Products to provide for sustainable forests and create local jobs.

*"Creating a market for distinctive wood products and services is our challenge,"* says Lankford.

His goal is to build a sustainable work force to thin overgrown forests and reduce the risks of fire and disease.

Lankford likes to utilize small diameter trees to create unique products. From completed log cabins to rustic siding for existing homes or barns or fancy knotted logs for a child's table or bench, Lankford can take any type of wood, any size, rotted or crooked, and make a functional product.

He created Lankford Foresters, Inc. in 1975 and built a forest conser-



Forester Len Lankford and RC&D Coordinator Jane Wustrow at new pavilion in Westcliffe built with roundwood from Lankford's forest thinning.

vation management network for private landowners. In 1994, he expanded the business into a sawmill facility near Westcliffe, Colorado, and renamed his business Greenleaf Forestry and Wood Products, Inc. Lankford currently has 10-12 full-time employees working at his mill and thinning forests.

Lankford received help from the Sangre de Cristo Resource Conservation & Development Council (RC&D) in obtaining grants for several projects.

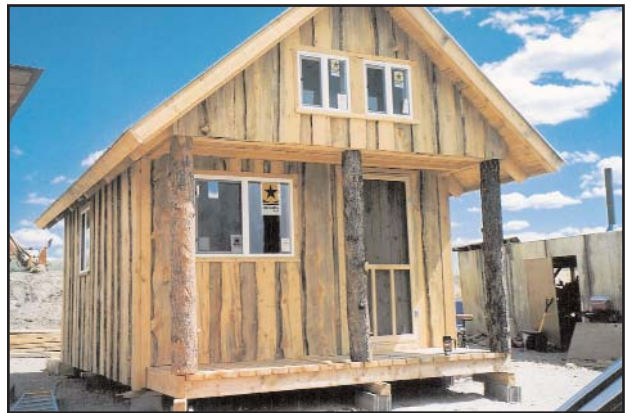
Jane Wustrow, Project Coordinator for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, which assists the Sangre de Cristo RC&D, says, *"Len partnered with RC&D to construct a roundwood pavilion for the community of Westcliffe."*

The project was funded in part by a \$40,000 grant from the U. S. Forest Products Laboratory for which the RC&D helped the town of Westcliffe apply. The goal was to demonstrate construction using 3-6 inch diameter roundwood.

*"The pavilion project proved that restoration forestry can be successful in the marketplace, enhance economic development, improve the environment, and provide a valuable service to the community,"* said Wustrow.

The RC&D also helped Lankford obtain two other grants, a \$30,000 business planning grant from the Four Corners Sustainable Forests Partnership in 2000, and a \$40,000 grant for training workers at the Lankford mill from the U. S. Forest Service Region 2 National Fire Plan. Lankford used the Four Corners grant to develop a community-based forestry model.

At the Greenleaf sawmill,



Greenleaf Forest & Wood Products top-of-the-line cabin, which sells for \$21,000.

Lankford says the ultimate products being constructed out of 12-inch or smaller trees are cabins. His top-of-the-line cabin, an 11 x 15-foot facility with two lofts recently sold for \$21,000.

Fence posts are another big use for the small trees. Lankford also likes to get creative and make special orders for products like bark covered flower planters, dog kennels, tack boxes, footstools, or roping dogs for practicing cowboys.

In the last year, Lankford has been invited to speak at forestry conferences in the West and most recently he made a presentation to the top staff of the U. S. Forest Service in Washington D. C.

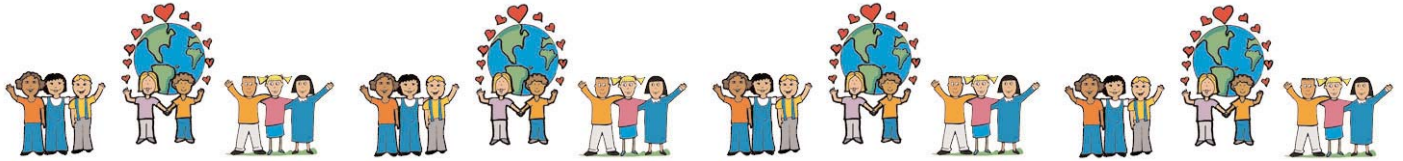
Len says there is plenty of need for small forest management firms like his. In the Black Forest, a subdivided area north of Colorado Springs, Lankford estimates some 100,000 acres are in disarray. He is currently providing forest management services to homeowners in this area.

*"This could provide continuous work for a business like mine,"* says Lankford. *"The challenge is to put to good use the smaller trees that are selectively removed to enhance the forest,"* he says.

For information on Greenleaf Forestry & Wood Products, Inc., go to [www.greenleafforestry.com](http://www.greenleafforestry.com).



# Colorado NRCS Employees teaching kids about Conservation



## City kids learn about soils, water, and gardening

**Story and photos by Tim Carney, District Conservationist Longmont Field Office**

Introducing urban teens to the joys of vegetable gardening provides a rich opportunity for developing leadership, business, and interpersonal skills while giving the teens a chance to make a hands-on connection with the land.

Longmont and Boulder Valley Conservation District Technician Sean Brown and Longmont NRCS Engineering Intern Robert Duran recently participated in Cultiva, a

10-week long youth-operated organic market garden workshop, hosted by the non-profit organization, Growing Gardens. Growing Gardens strives to provide a living example of a sustainable multi-cultural and multi-generational community through community gardening, emphasizing the importance of urban food security.

"Cultiva is a great project and we really like providing support to the effort," said NRCS Longmont office District Conservationist Tim Carney.

"This year our summer engineering intern Robert Duran and Longmont and Boulder Valley Conservation District Technician Sean Brown taught the Cultiva teens the basics of soil identification and basic irrigation management. Sean and Robert demonstrated the installation and use of three tensiometers that had been donated to the Cultiva project. These are excellent irrigation management tools that identify soil moisture



Conservation District Technician Sean Brown teaches teens the basics of soil type identification and why it's important to know your soils when planning an irrigation system.

content and help in the planning of the irrigation timing."

"It was a good experience," said Sean. "The kids learned a lot and we were able to keep their attention."

Robert agreed. "The kids were pretty interested in learning about the different kinds of soils and they were interested in learning how to use the tensiometers. A few of them came up to us after our presentation to ask more questions."



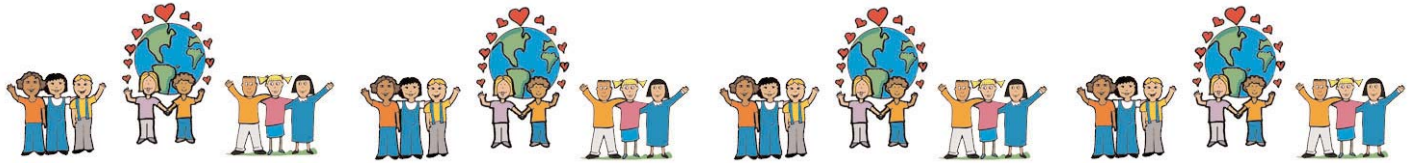
Engineering Technician Intern Robert Duran demonstrates how a tensiometer works, while Sean Brown, Conservation District Technician, helps teen gardeners prepare the ground for installing the moisture measurement instrument.



Sean (left) and Robert standing in the Cultiva garden plot, teach students the importance of knowing soil moisture content in order to plan an irrigation schedule.



# Colorado NRCS Employees teaching kids about Conservation



## Students send "thanks" to NRCS Staffers

by Mary Miller

Public Affairs Specialist, Area 3

John Valentine, District Conservationist, and Barbara Gohlke, Soil Conservationist, both of the Colorado Springs field office, received a surprise in the mail after spending a day at Turman Elementary School teaching 2nd and 4th graders about watersheds. They received a package of thank you letters written by the teachers and students!

Valentine and Gohlke used the Sangre de Cristo



Barbara Gohlke, Colorado Springs field office Soil Conservationist (to left and back of trailer), gives students a watershed demonstration that shows the value of various conservation measures that naturally exist or can be applied to protect the land.

RC&D River and Riparian Study Center to give the classes a watershed demonstration.

"It means so much to our kids to get out and have someone else teach for a while," said Christine McMain, Turman 2nd grade teacher.

"It means a bunch to me

to have willing volunteers assist with education. Thank you!"

The River and Riparian Study Center, or River Trailer, is used to teach students about erosion, wetlands, rivers, and the workings of an entire watershed. Many NRCS areas and conservation districts in Colorado have similar trailers.

According to the many letters received, the students enjoyed the presentation and learned from it. Many, in their letters, even asked Valentine and Gohlke back next year.

## Hands-on Soil and Water Conservation Learning

by Jeanette Colville, Public Affairs Specialist, Area 2

The Boulder Valley and the Longmont Conservation Districts work with the NRCS Longmont Field Office to spread the concept of soil and water conservation to youngsters through two fun and fascinating interactive educational tools, a stream table and a ground water flow model.

The stream table demonstrates the formation of land forms such as deltas, and stream bank erosion and other short- and long-term earth forming processes.

The ground water flow model demonstrates the movement of pollutants through soil, and how pollutants in one area impact downstream waters of another area.

The Boulder Valley and Longmont Conservation Districts provide the use of these teaching tools to classrooms throughout their areas free of charge and on a first-come, first-served basis.

"The stream table and the ground flow model go into the classrooms about every other



NRCS Soil Conservationist Shelly Anderson demonstrates landform formation processes on the stream table for students and teachers in a Longmont area school.

month," said Conservation District Manager Nancy McIntyre.

"We're working with the science teachers to see if we can get them into the classrooms more often."